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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1634
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0123
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3572
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0007
RUEHBN/AMCONSUL MELBOURNE 6425
RUEHPT/AMCONSUL PERTH 4689
RUEHDN/AMCONSUL SYDNEY 4657

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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB/ESC MONOSSON, OES/EGC THOMPSON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KGHG](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [AS](#)
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY: AUSTRALIAN
VIEWS

REF: A. SECSTATE 61286
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 59969

[1](#)1. (SBU) Per instructions in reftels, Econoff met with Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism Manager for Renewable Energy Rick Belt on June 16. Belt said that Australia was "of a piece" with the U.S. on the importance of focusing on capacity building in IRENA, and that Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson will sign the IRENA statute in Egypt as the head of the Australian delegation. Australia strongly supports the UAE's bid to host the headquarters of IRENA, and is currently reviewing the background of known DG candidates but has not taken a decision on which to support.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Belt said that Australia had been skeptical of IRENA when first proposed, but after examining the work done by IRENA's developers to address concerns about duplicating work in other venues, had decided that a body that focuses on capacity building and assistance targeted at developing policy and regulatory frameworks that enable greater renewable energy use was sensible. Belt said that, as the government came around to joining IRENA, there was a conscious decision to do so early so that they could participate in shaping the body in Egypt. Belt noted that Australia was working to strengthen its bilateral relationship with the UAE, and so support for hosting IRENA fit naturally within that policy.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Australia is not currently planning a voluntary contribution in the interim period before mandatory contributions take effect. Belt said that Australia has crunched the numbers, prior to any decision by the U.S. on joining, and had determined that the initial mandatory contribution from Australia will be in the realm of A\$1.4 million per year. If the U.S. joins, Belt noted that the amount would be reduced significantly as the U.S. would support 22 percent of the IRENA budget. Belt said that, although there were no guarantees that both houses of the Australian Parliament would ratify the legislation, the negatives associated with blocking international cooperation on renewables, at a time when Australia is stepping up domestic efforts to utilize renewable resources, would likely far outweigh the benefits of opposing ratification.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Australia is in discussion with Japan on each country's positions before the Egypt meeting, according to Belt's deputy, Veronica Westacott. Westacott expressed interest in meeting with the U.S. delegation prior to the start of the meetings in Egypt if possible to discuss positions and coordinate as needed. Belt added that any available details on the makeup of the U.S. delegation would

be welcomed by Australia.

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